



Three Questions Followers Want Their Leaders to Answer

VALUE READING



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Simplicity in Understanding Leadership

Leadership' is without question a broad and intricate subject and area for development. It is also a field of study which might leave people with the impression that you need to be educated to understand leadership.

However, from the perspective of a follower it is quite simple ... and I believe we find the essence of leadership and the most important truths about leadership in this simplicity:

I believe that from followers' perspective there are fundamentally 3 questions that leaders need to answer in words, deeds and behavior, before they will give them their full support.



The Myths of Creativity and Innovation

What Will You Model To Me?

It is what we see in the person of a leader that would make us willing to trust and follow him. It is the quality of the leader's character or his example of personal mastery that establishes the relationship of true leader and willing follower.

What Is Our Destination?

We are motivated by a mental picture of our destination. In other words by vision. Does the leader have a vision and a sense of direction to realize the vision? As a follower we want to be convinced of the leader's purposefulness, his competence in the 'territory' that need to be covered and his ability to adapt to and lead change.

How Will You Engage Me?

You might be a wonderful person with great character, drive and strategic ability; but if you don't know or don't want to make me actively part of

the journey you still won't have my full support as a follower. I will only experience full meaning if I'm involved as a whole person ... not only for my hands and not only for my hands and head but also for my heart and soul. As a follower we want to feel that the leader values us and has the skill and will to engage us in a meaningful way. We expect to be inspired and to experience a degree of charisma as the leader creates the conditions for effective teamwork.

The Status of Leadership in the Three Areas

I believe that a shift in our emphasis and focus need to take place. From head and hand to heart and soul. We spent a lot of time - and still do - on thinking and doing, but not so on feeling and the quality of our being; a lot of time on the 'what' but not on the 'why'. Cognitively we've become super strong, but spiritually we've become weak and empty.

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The three questions represent the three forces in leadership: character (what will you model to me?), competence (what is our destination and how will we reach it?), and charisma (how will you engage me; include me; inspire me?)

Changing Expectations

If we lived in ancient times when progress meant territorial dominance and hard, hand-fought victories on the battlefield, we would be looking for a strong, brave and imposing figure with some ability to out-think the enemy. In the Middle Ages and feudal system spiritual sanction was all-important; bishops and kings were leaders. Later in the industrial age we would be looking for superior scientific minds. As the world became more ordered, specialized and hierarchically structured in governments, institutions, business and many others types of organizations; technical or functional ability and political astuteness (skillful in tactics and power play) allowed many to rise to the top and thus be recognized as leaders. In this scenario leadership is typically exercised through command and control complimented by tactics of intimidation and manipulation. Unfortunately, there are far too many examples with this type of leadership and organizations stuck in this old mind-set. The result is that we still have many fear-based cultures where people can't speak

their minds freely and the truth is seldom faced.

Leadership for Our Times Require a Shift in Thinking

Who do we typically regard as good leaders? Who climbs the ladder to higher positions of authority and power? Who gets the benefit of the doubt when it comes to filling leadership positions? Is it not those with a strong knowledge base as reflected in their academic qualifications and other certificates? Is it not those with technical know-how and management experience? And is it not those who have demonstrated the ability to use their positional power to get quick results? I believe it is mostly the case. Whoever fits the bill, can be forgiven if he or she feels superior to the rest. The combination of high intellect, know-how, tactical skill and a robust ego is a powerful one. It is almost inevitable that the leadership challenge ends up to be no more than a battle of wits and ego's in budget, planning and strategy sessions. Teamwork, the key to success, suffers as a result.

The Leadership Deficiency As Seen By the Majority of Members of Organizations

What most people in unhealthy organizations secretly or openly hope to see is a change of heart in their leadership; less self-importance and self-interest and more service orientation. Too often do I hear people complain about yet another change of strategy that was decided on by the top management? Not only do they find it disruptive, they also don't feel part of the thinking and hence unrecognized. Moreover, they feel it is senseless and a mere repetition (in a different language) of a previous strategy. The lesson is in the adage: culture eats strategy for lunch. Leaders who are culturally focused and involved, in addition to their strategic role, demonstrate different qualities over and above being knowledgeable, functionally, politically and tactically effective – they demonstrate high levels of awareness, self-mastery, and appropriate leadership responses as different situations require.

Development Areas and Criteria for 21st Century Leaders

● Awareness

Self-awareness forms the cornerstone for awareness of others and the cornerstone for self-regulation and regulation of inter-personal relationships. As obvious and simple as it seems, it is not a given. As a starting point it requires openness, vulnerability and humility to grow in self-awareness. With the 'chips' of knowledge, experience and positional power on one's shoulder, the tendency is very high to filter out signals that might be damaging to the ego.

The defining, breakthrough moment that leads to heightened awareness and sets 'inner work' in motion, often is the understanding that the use of outside help –

typically from family members to friends, colleagues, books, coaches and mentors -- is not a sign of weakness, but of becoming more authentic and mature.

● Inner Work (Self-Mastery)

Awareness is one thing, but challenging conversations with oneself is another. As all exemplary leaders will testify, the make or break in their growth as leaders were the challenges they put to themselves in response to the challenges they experienced from the outside – be they tragedies, major disappointments, lack of results, personal attacks on them, honest but hurtful feedback or overwhelming responsibility. Sometimes 'inner work' demands nothing short of a deep and painful 'inner journey' - going back to unresolved issues and unhealed pain of the past. But most of the time it is nothing as dramatic as that, but being

intentional and committed to grow as a person and a leader in all the many wonderful facets of being human.

● Context-Sensitive Leadership Responses (Use Of Inner Wisdom)

Key to leadership and leadership development is the ability to respond appropriately and more wisely to all kinds of situations. That is why awareness and inner work is so important. To think that reading textbooks will help the leader to do the right thing or minimize damage is short-sighted. Leadership in its proper sense is authentic, spontaneous and from within. Whatever knowledge the leader comes across, it needs to be internalized to make any real and meaningful difference.

Leadership is built on personal growth or else it is nothing but position (power), self-importance, and manipulative tactics.



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Below is the link of MILE blog where you can find Dr. Gerhard Van Rensburg's webinar video:

<http://blog.mile.org/three-questions-followers-want-their-leaders-to-answer/>



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